

de K2JGG/JY
... K2 .../JY ...

The above title comprises no small part of the Jordan DXpedition of the month and was one of the many problems which were foreseen but completely unavoidable. Most dxpeditions entail numerous problems common to all such as setting up, operating problems (with others), transportation, band conditions, time shortage, etc., but little is usually said about the preparations involved in obtaining permission and solving in advance the particular problems which present themselves to in each case.

All of seven months, some acting ^{ve} and others just waiting went into this operation. June 1, 1964, seven weeks to vacation time, a ~~bundle of~~ ^{money} green conscientiously saved, and a little reminiscing of FP8AB (Nov. '58. QST) coupled with the fact that the XYL was now licenced as WA2HJJ brought on the idea of DXpedition possibilities. Now my personal interest has always been DX ^{ing} although it is an interest which cycles regularly two or three times a year. This left a little doubt as to (1) what ^{can be} ~~is~~ still rare, (2) what is possible ^{from me} in dollars, and (3) where can I get a license in seven weeks.

A casual phone call was in order to W2HTI, who besides being a longtime friend, no one will dispute his activity as a DXer. Several possibilities were forthcoming from this source but somehow JY kept getting mumbles and muddled into the conversation. (W2HTI at this time needed this for Honor Roll status.)

Now the illogical sequence of events began. At Ed's suggestion (~~potential DXpeditioners note~~), a call was made to the Jordan Pavilion at the N.Y.C. World's Fair, and initial contact was made with the Tourist Attache, of the Tourism and Press Office

in Amman, Mr. M. Baghal. A personal interview was in order, and not allowing any grass to grow I agreed that I could be in N.Y.C. in about two hours.

This first phone call indicated that amateur radio was a completely unknown subject and the twohour drive to the pavilion was spent with Ed in trying to ~~only~~ ^{obtain} a good and complete explanation for someone ^{on, from whom} who had never heard of a ham. Try it sometime.

An appointment with Mr. Baghal allowed us free admission to the pavilion where over a cup of Jordanian coffee we discussed the situation with him. Mr. Baghal after hearing the request and explanation was extremely optimistic and suggested a formal request be written with full explanation that he might forward it to Amman, Jordan, to his superiors with his recommendation for their approval. At this point Ed and I both had mixed feelings about the whole thing. It looked good. Mr. Baghal said about four or five weeks for permission, and yet it seemed to be entirely too simple to actually fulminate. Consider that we both knew of several prominent DXers who had tried to operate from Jordan in the past and some had personally been interviewed by officials in Amman without success. Well, it was the first step and if I continued I would at least have the satisfaction of knowing I tried.

A somewhat long letter of about three typed pages was composed that evening, reviewing in detail our personal discussion and including a request for permission to operate for both the XYL, WA2HJJ, and myself. This was sent off the next morning, special delivery, and the waiting began.

After about three weeks, I regularly began to call the tourist attache about once a week to find out the progress. Each time he apologized for the delay, tried to explain the difficulties, and continued in his original optimism that it was just

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a matter of time and permission would be forthcoming.

We 11, vacation time came and no permission. The XYL and I went to the Caribbean on a last minute jaunt with assurances that when, Not if, the permission was granted for Jordan operation it would be good anytime I chose to go there. I had all but given up. Upon our return I made one last phone call and it was explained that the request had been partially approved. This operation had to be OKed by (1) the Tourism and Press Authority (2) the Security ^{Dept} Police, and (3) the Jordan Arab Army. This was the last phone call made (August) and as time passed I completely forgot the whole deal and told a few people that I had been trying for Jordan but it was all but a closed book now. Having had a taste of travel, the XYL and I began our plans early for the next year's vacation, and started saving again with the thought of a DXpedition having passed into oblivion.

November 21, 1964 - birthday - Letter from Tourism and Press Office, N'Y C. "Your radio operation in Jordan has been approved by the authorities concerned." It took at least one hour to get back into the swing of things and then the problems began. Money, time off, not much to go on - your radio operation has been approved by, equipment, money, passports, shots, money, reservation, money, etc.

The first problem was solved the following Monday. Dec. 11 through 27 was the only time I could get off from work, and as a leave, ^{not} vacation - more money. ^{problem} This cut the XYL out of the trip since as church organist and choir director it was her busiest season. Those of you who needed JY and made the grade owe her a card of thanks for not raising more hell about my being away on Xmas.

Next, an attempt was made to get something more specific

on the permission, i.e., what authorities? my call? and assigned one? when can I operate? all bands? any frequencies? CW? SSB? etc. This was a dead end. The only answer, verbal via phone, 'you have permission,' just present ^{the} letter on your arrival.' Well, Jordan is a long way and that letter wasn't too specific. Several feelers were put out to private financial sources for assistance and enthusiasm was high but ~~still~~ ^{still} 'rather shady permission.' Next W2BHK or DXpertation a ~~one~~ ^{one} ~~int~~ ^{int} was contacted. Stu was interested and said he would get back to me in a few days. Well, that few days ~~lasted~~ ^{lasted} a month and during this time I began to consider that perhaps it wasn't too farfetched that Stu ~~had~~ ^{might have} plans for Jordan already (~~he did~~) and if I wanted to pull it off I was going to have to go with or without help, and quick, and if without rely on donations from generous DXers. I called Stu and told him my decision to go either way and take the chance on the sketchy permission. A bird in hand? We had a deal. Now in all fairness let me say that in that last two week of preparation the expense picture began to take accurate shape and after a close look at the cost, I can honestly say that the whole deal would probably have washed out if I had to undertake the full cost myself. To give you a general picture 2600 QSO's figures to close to 80 cents per ~~card~~ ^{QSO} and when you add in the loss of two weeks salary. You can see the good ones are expensive and that's why they are good. My equipment totaled 100 lbs. exclusive of my personal allowance. Even at freight rates, it's a big chunk of money.

Now during all this a state would have it I was busy at work, busy helping XYL plan Christmas for the kids, aged 11 and 4, and just generally busy. Somebody had to work and organize, make phone calls, set rigs, etc. ~~W2HTF~~ ^{W2HTF} Ed ~~would~~ ^{was} ~~like~~ ^{like} to have gone also and even though I was all for it, one thing held me back - an uneasy feeling about that letter and what was

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going to happen when I arrived in Jordan. I'll never know what would have happened but I feel confident that the added expenses of a two man operation would not have been worth the risk of refusal on arrival. And I was refused once - close call. Well, back to that later. Ed did all the phone calls, got the rigw, (W2VCZ and K2HL3), the alarm clock, prepared the ~~leads~~ ^{leads}, set up the rigs for test at home (~~the~~ ^{two} KWM2's set up for dual receiver operation), and ungraciously ^s allowed his WYL to give my hell for taking up so much of his time. His was the only QSL to be mailed from Jordan and the first to be credited ~~at~~ ^{at} ~~ARRL~~ and he earned it!

Friday, December 11 - 7 P.M. via Pan Am to London, Vienna, Istanbul, and Beirut. — hours, a long, long trip with one hour stops for leg stretching. I had a 12 hour layover at Beirut, had to take all that gear through customs just so I could check it, a few generous tips, and Gus W4BPD, waiting to meet me. Gus had just returned from Jordan? and we had much to discuss. Gus had the name of everybody who was anybody in Amman and this info I'm sure saved me at least 1 day's delay in Amman. He had a place for me to stay which was welcome relief. I was traveling without any reservations due to lack of time and the fact that in Jordan they are impossible to get during the holy season. Personal bargaining always seems to work though. Well, there's seven hours difference between home and the Middle East and I was all fouled up as to when I should sleep. I woke up at 3 A.M., hired a taxi to drive me around town at 4AM, then onto the airport all for 5 lbs (3 lbs. to the dollar) and all kinds of entertainment offers. Caught the 7:15 AM MEA flight to Jerusalem and then the real problems began. Three tries at landing in fog and on to Amman. I was badly scared but going

to Amman must have been divine providence or something because I would have had to go there anyway. Before leaving I found out that the Jordanian government works every day but Friday. I arrived on Sunday, Dec. 13, ^{in just my luck} a feast day and everything was closed. I got the gear through customs easily where I expected problems. A proper notation was made in my passport, (for those with doubts) to insure that it left with me on my return. I sat around all day Sunday fidgeting.

Monday morning, 8 PM. First to Security ^{Help,} ~~Dept.~~ who escorted me to Tourism and Press office. This is a very important function in the Jordanian govt. The paper work and file system is quite different from ours and after about an hour of searching I was informed that they hadn't expected me before the summer of 1965 and therefore they were very sorry but --- Wel, what do you say except there's been a misunderstanding to which all agree. A cup of coffee and I notice they refer to me by the wrong name. Oh yours not Mr. --- ^{a certain way} (I knew him personally), ~~another~~ ^{They} ~~has~~, and finally we're back on the track. Type a letter, all OK with Tourism and Press and back to Security Police. Interview with Cpl. Sgt. ~~Leah~~ and then Major in charge (Amman and Jerusalem.) Why do you want to use radio? Broadcasting Christmas festivities? Radio amateurs? 'Like photography, a hobbe' Whyre? All countries? No Israel!!! OK What frequency (note singular)? 'All amateur frequencies, for example 14.0-14.35 21 - 21.4 7 - 7.3 SSB., C.W., etc.' No response. ^{Just this} A cup of tea and then to the hotel with the lieutenant to examine the gear. Power? To the lieutenant's office, coffee, back to the hotel this time with the chief mechanic to examine the equipment. Again back to the lieutenant's office, vore paper work and atype a letter to the Mafor. Back to the main office. ^{and} Security approves operation for anyplace in Jordan, preferably Amman or Jerusalem.,

and a ^{mother} letter is typed and we go back to Tourism and Press dept. It is now 1 PM and I discovered that the government offices ~~ss~~ work from 7.30 AM to 1.30 PM? Tourism and Press is OK, Security is OK. Army approval is next, but the day is over. Tuesday, 8AM, back to Security to await personnel escort. Tuesday followed suit, but the Army is intimately connected with all communications in Jordan and here people were more familiar with electronics. The questions were more pointed and technical - power input or output? PEP? No hedging here. 'Your letter said 100 watts, your equipment is 150 watts PEP? This is input power, output is approximately 100 watts. Exactly when will you start and finish? What hours? What frequency? At this point a compromise was the best ^{argu} obtainable. With the ~~agggg~~ ^{argu}ments of band conditions and QRN, QRM, etc., I made 20 meter the major operating band and we settled for 14010, 14020, 14110, 14120 and 7.005. Perhaps I could have got more but then perhaps the whole deal would have been scrapped. The army had final say and I went away satisfied. No 4X4 operation permitted. Another approval to be typed, return to security who provided me with a letter of permission (with no explanation) to the Chief of Security in Jerusalem. Clearance through the army was slow due to security of the army base itself. Proper channels led to secretary to the defence minister and finally to personal chat with the Chief Signal Officer, Jordan Arab Army. With all these people, language was no problem, since English is taught in all Jordanian schools. Lucky for me. All of these people were extremely polite, and in each office extended Bedouin or Turkish coffee or tea while waiting. It is interesting to note that without exception none of these officials with whom I spoke had ever heard of any previous amateur

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radio operation in Jordan, and insisted that the processing was slow because it was a new venture for them also. The question of identifying came up only in Army Gdpts. They never heard of JY prefix and suggested I use my USA call to which I agreed with the /JY indicator. At this point I was agreeable to anything even knowing the difficulty of my own call on phone as well as the probable difficulty of attracting attention with a portable sign on CW.

Time lost the first three days was aggravating to say the least and once I had that letter in hand, I was determined to catch up as rapidly as possible. 2 1/2 hours after receipt I was 55 miles away in Security Hdqts. in Jerusalem i.e. checked out of hotel, hired a private taxi (3.5 dinars at \$2.80 ^{to the} ~~dinar~~) had flat tire at Dear Sea area. One problem left, the Police Chief wanted to know immediately where I would stay. I agreed to call him 1/2 hour after I left his office to confirm this. This left no time to look around so I had to settle for Deluxe accommodations at the Jerusalem Intercontinental Hotel, on the Mount of Olives. By far the best QTH for radio and ^{also} the most expensive in Jerusalem. Oh, well, I was comfortable at least, and accommodations were short at Christmas. There was no extra charge at Xmas which is normal at Jerusalem so it worked out. Somehow at this point it seemed that the mission was accomplished and getting on the air was anticlimactic. Now with all those guys waiting I washed up and had a nice leisurely dinner after which (11PM) we (I and 2 hotel houseboys) put the beam up on the roof of Jerusalem's plushiest spot. They really thought I was nuts especially when they saw the size of that monstrous TV antenna assembled (H₂ gain TH2 cut to 6' sections) After getting across the 220V a couple times (I couldn't find anything

resembling ground except aluminum casement window), 20 meters was dead and I worked a few European stations ~~on~~ 40 with the 20 meter beam. Settled down to a good night's sleep, alarm set, ready for Dec. 16, the first day of real operation.

Well, this is the real story of a particular DXpedition. Most of Dec. 16 to Dec. 26 is known from on the air operation. Conditions of course are relative, so from what I could see, they started good the first four days, and steadily declined after that. At one time, 3200 QSOs was easily in sight but it settled to 2600. If you needed it and made it I could tell on the other end, and it made the trip worthwhile. I have many of you on tape, recorded by ~~W2HTF~~ *Frank Hansen* and ~~K2HFB~~ *Robert*, and your operating sounded great over there. Others might not be so proud. There are a few of you also on tape.

I'm sure that my experiences are similar to many opinions expressed in the past but here's a few, and let the chips fall. Americans, and I include all, north and south, are the best DX operators. Generally they are familiar with your particular style of operating before they call you. There are exceptions, of course, but I could and did work 3 W's while working a European, gave them all RST and ended signing with the European station without his being any the wiser. It's not difficult but impossible to get across even to the minority of European stations that you're not interested in anything but a RS or RST. Note that for short path I beamed across western Europe for the states. QRM was murder. Strongest and most numerous stations for me were Communist countries, especially YU's and U stations all day. Rag chewers I, DJ, DL, DM, UA, Europe's DXers OH' ON, OE, HB9, and G's. Most difficult path East, ^{to} ~~to~~ ~~DL~~, VK, JA, SoF. Americal. Like clockwork within 5 minutes of switching from CW to SSB I was asked when I was going to get on CW and vice

versa. CW operation was limited at times due to simultaneous long and short path openings resulting in bad echo and bad C.W. *copy*

To drop a few lemons on my own side of the pond, I'll say that with a few exceptional operators, W6's gave me the worst time. When it was open to them they did it exclusively at 59 signals level. Although I never answered one, tailending and general cutthroat operations seemed to be the order of the day. After hearing many tales of woe originating from the west coast about getting a break, I listened daily especially for you fellows, but I'll never again sympathize with you - you ask for it!

W7 and the Pacific got the short end of the deal. I don't recall working any on SSB, and only a few 7's on C.W. W8 were next. They were always weak. *[When you have to dig for W8/W9 things are bad.]* Contrary to the opinions of ^{some} ~~several~~ I did not shut down at 1730 every day, they just didn't have the opening.

Well, 2600 QSOs, 97+1 countries, a weak CW signal, and impossible SSB signal, QRM, imagination, a few fakers who tried to make me think they copied, and a couple who worked me after I left add up to DXpedition.

As far as other possibilities in the area I did little checking, but 206 looks good, and also there's a small section of Israel which is completely surrounded geographically by Jordan (Bob White please note).

A short word about the land and the people. I did my sightseeing in the early morning (local time 0500-1000 GMT) when the band activity was only moderate. If you open your eyes, it's a beautiful historic land. I managed Amman, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, the Dead Sea (1200 ft. below sea level) and Jericho. Each has special interest to the tourist. - Amman - the rapidly

expanding capital city, Jerusalem - the old walled city guarded on one side by border guards of the Jordan Arab army and Israeli troops with a narrow barren neutral zone between, Bethlehem - a traditional Christmas town on Christmas eve something like Times Square on New Years Eve, the Dead Sea - strangely quiet, silent, 28/0/0 salt, not a living creature in it, and Jericho - the promised land, palm trees, oranges, all fruit farming green.

The people - the friendliest you could ask for. The Arab likes Americans, yes, even poor ones. If you will try his coffee, tea, and native dishes, whether you like it or not, you're his friend. From every Arab, the same greeting - Welcome and he means it.

de K2JGG/JY